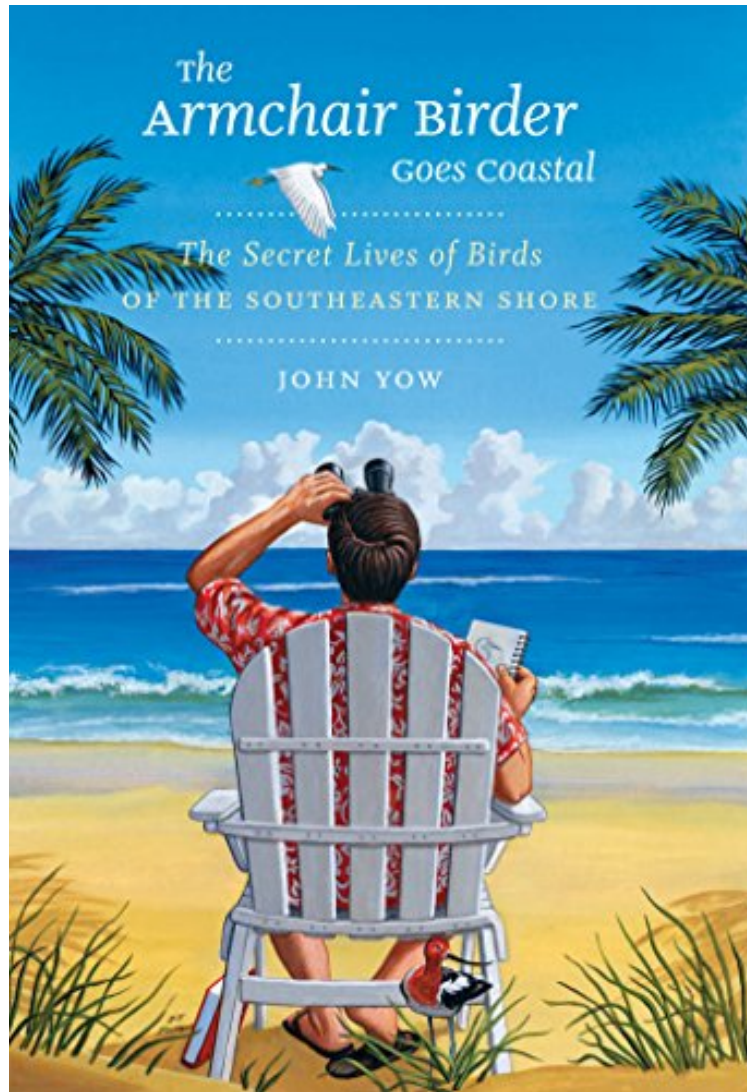


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The Armchair Birder Goes Coastal: The Secret Lives of Birds of the Southeastern Shore

John Yow

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John Yow : The Armchair Birder Goes Coastal: The Secret Lives of Birds of the Southeastern Shore before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Armchair Birder Goes Coastal: The Secret Lives of Birds of the Southeastern Shore:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. field guide to other bird writers By Ken Kardash I am not an avid birder, but the glowing reviews encouraged me to purchase this book to learn more about birds I might see on a trip to coastal Virginia. By the time I'd waded through it, my interest had been shot down as surely as by a poachers

shotgun. Maybe I missed the irony in the term armchair birder: almost all the information here is quoted from other sources. Each of the forty or so species is the subject of a 7-8 page essay that follows the same plodding format: migration, breeding and defensive behaviours, sandwiched between banal details of the authors half-hearted attempts to do some actual birdwatching himself, usually ending with some repetitive platitude about conservation. The problem is that none of the behaviours listed in numbing detail are likely to be observed by the casual observer that the title implies. Far more practical would be details on what makes each species distinctive in its appearance, flight and feeding patterns. Instead, the author seems to throw up his hands over the difficulty in differentiating some of the species he has selected. I suppose this is in keeping with the armchair approach. And amazingly for a field guide, not only are the illustrations crude ink sketches, but several chapters lack any illustration at all! Having shelled out for what I thought might be a fun, practical bird guide, I admit my feathers feel ruffled. It would be better to go directly to the sources he admiringly quotes, such as Sibley, Peterson or even Audubon.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Glad I bought it! By Gramma 7A relaxing, enjoyable, and informative read. I laughed and learned some very interesting facts that your basic field guide doesn't have the space to cover. I look forward to reading it again.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Delightfully entertaining journey in search of coastal birds By ZanNot to redefine "armchair birding," but I thoroughly enjoyed many pleasurable winter hours sitting near a warm fire in a comfortable chair reading John Yow's most recent book on shore birds of the southeast. His essays recount his adventures to find and identify his favorite coastal birds. His well spun narratives combine humor, insights and facts about the birds and their behavior. Armchair Birder Goes Coastal inspires me to leave the comfort of the chair in search of my own local birds.

With his distinctively witty, anecdotal, and disarming voice, John Yow now journeys to the shore and shares his encounters with some of the most familiar and beloved coastal birds. Out of his travels--from North Carolina's Outer Banks, down the Atlantic coast, and westward along the Gulf of Mexico--come colorful accounts of twenty-eight species, from ubiquitous beach birds like sanderlings and laughing gulls to wonders of nature like roseate spoonbills and the American avocets. Along the way, Yow delves deeply into the birds' habits and behaviors, experiencing and relating the fascination that leads many an amateur naturalist to become the most unusual of species--a birder. Seasonally organized chapters explore the improbable, the wonderful, and the amusing aspects of these birds' lives. Yow embellishes his observations with field notes, anecdotes, and stories from some of America's finest naturalists--including John James Audubon, Arthur Cleveland Bent, Rachel Carson, and Peter Matthiessen. Combining the endless fascination of bird life with the pleasure of good reading, *The Armchair Birder Goes Coastal* is the perfect companion for any nature lover's next trip to the beach.

Entertaining A good read, this title is appropriate for generalists interested in natural history, the wildlife of the southeastern U.S. shore, and birders.--Library Journal [Yow] allows readers to share his discoveries and enjoy the surprises that each bird can bring. . . . [and this book] will help them gain a new appreciation for the unique characteristics that set shorebirds apart and make them so enticing to birders.--About.com This book can be very funny, but it's way more. . . . [Yow's] well-chosen quotes from the masters add a smart heft to his clear and often fascinating narrative. His writing is as important as his watching. . . . This book has plucked me from my backyard perch . . . and dropped me into an oceanside beach chair to marvel.--Clyde Edgerton, Garden Gun You don't have to go coastal to fall in love with this literary compendium of birding, easily as "charming, witty, anecdotal, [and] readable" as its forefathers.--Atlanta Journal-Constitution Yow ventures from his porch to take readers hunting for shorebirds [with] his folksy, humorous, and erudite style.--Publishers Weekly Through enchanting descriptions and personal anecdotes, Yow makes characters--the villainous ruddy turnstone, the "drunken" reddish egret--out of his subjects, carefully highlighting each species' subtleties.--Audubon Editors' Choice In this informative, chatty, anecdotal and eminently readable tome, Yow takes us season by season into the watery environment enjoyed by its feathered denizens.--The Rocky Mount Telegram Audubon Editors' Choice Infusing stories, observations, and musings, Yow makes it easy to learn about these fascinating birds. This book might well lead 'armchair birders' to become active birders, and eventually, conservationists.--Janet Lembke, author of *Why the Cat Purrs: How We Relate to Other Species and Why It Matters* Witty, irreverent, and perennially entertaining, *The Armchair Birder Goes Coastal* is--like its author John Yow--a great companion for a ramble along the beach or into the tidal marsh. Yow mixes science, history, culture and his own experiences as an 'idiosyncratic' birder to create a delightfully readable peek into the lives of the Southeast's most familiar water birds.--Scott Weidensaul, author of *Of a Feather: A Brief History of American Birding* About the Author John Yow is a freelance writer based in Acworth, Georgia, and former senior editor at Longstreet Press. He is author of *The Armchair Birder: Discovering the Secret Lives of Familiar Birds*.